



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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Bobby D. Cagle, MSW
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Commissioner Bobby Cagle joins First Lady Sandra Deal
for “Read Across Georgia” Initiative**

School Visits stress importance of Early Learning and Reading

Atlanta, Ga., (April 19, 2012) – Bobby Cagle, commissioner of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, will join Georgia’s First Lady Sandra Deal on **Friday, April 20, 2012**, for her “Read Across Georgia” campaign.

Mrs. Deal and Commissioner Cagle will visit Pre-K classes at the following schools:

9:00 AM	Connally Elementary School 1654 Alvarado Way Atlanta, GA 30331
9:40 AM	Beecher Hills Elementary School 2257 Bolingbrook Drive Atlanta, GA 30331
10:40 AM	Kimberly Elementary School 3090 McMurray Drive Atlanta, GA 30311
11:45 AM	Continental Colony Elementary School 3181 Hogan Road Atlanta, GA 30331

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The First Lady launched the initiative earlier this year in support of Governor Nathan Deal’s goal of increasing the percentage of children reading at grade level by the completion of third grade. The governor has proclaimed March “Read Across Georgia” month. The First Lady and Commissioner Cagle will read the book “Who I’d Like to Be” by Elizabeth Brown to students and emphasize the necessity of mentorship and the importance of being reading-proficient.

“The governor pointed out in his State of the State address this year that children who cannot read at a third grade level by the time they finish the third grade are more likely to drop out of school, go to prison and have higher unemployment rates later in life,” said Commissioner Cagle. “This statistic shows the important roles that our Pre-K and early care and learning teachers play in developing our children for their personal success later in life. I am always honored to be with Mrs. Deal, who is a great role model for parents and teachers alike.”

“We must make a concerted effort to increase the percentage of children reading well and independently at grade-level,” said First Lady Deal. “By focusing our efforts on our youngest learners, we have the ability to teach them crucial skills that lay the ground work for all their future academic and career endeavors.”

The First Lady’s goal is to visit every school district across the state over the next three years.

About Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages the voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.